

AMENDMENTS TO THE CLAIMS

*Please amend the claims as follows:*

1-5. *(Canceled)*

6. *(Previously presented)* An image decoding device which decodes an encoded bit stream formed by encoding images for each object, comprising:

display speed information decoding means for decoding a header information area of the encoded bit stream to restore display speed information to indicate a number of VOPs displayed per unit time, the display speed information being included as a codeword in the header information area for a layer that is above a VOP layer and comprises a plurality of VOPs, wherein for the layer above the VOP layer, the header information area is separate from the data area; and

control means for controlling the reconstruction of said encoded images encoded for each object, based on said object display speed information restored by decoding.

7. *(Original)* The image decoding device of claim 6, wherein said display speed information decoding means decodes said object display speed information for each object.

8. *(Original)* The image decoding device of claim 6, wherein:

said display speed information decoding means decodes said object display speed information from said encoded bit stream for each object; and

said control means controls said image reconstruction, depending upon whether the object display speed indicated by said decoded object display speed information is a fixed or variable speed.

9. *(Original)* The image decoding device of claim 8, wherein:

said display speed information decoding means decodes said object display speed information from said encoded bit stream for each object; and

said control means controls said image reconstruction by specifying the display time of each image on the basis of the value of said object display speed in said decoded object display speed information when said object display speed information decoded by said display speed information decoding means indicates a fixed speed, and on the basis of display time information multiplexed for each image when said decoded object display speed information indicates a variable speed.

10. *(Original)* The image decoding device of claim 6, wherein:

said display speed information decoding means decodes said object display speed information from said encoded bit stream for each object; and

said control means controls said image reconstruction by specifying the display time of each object on the basis of said object display speed information when said object display speed information decoded by said display speed information decoding

means indicates a fixed speed and said fixed speed is a value indicated by said object display speed information, on the basis of display time information multiplexed for each image when said decoded object display speed information indicates a fixed speed and said fixed speed is not indicated as a specific value, and on the basis of said display time information multiplexed for each image when said decoded object display speed information indicates a variable speed.

11. (*Original*) The image decoding device of claim 6, wherein said control means is provided with: decoding time specifying means for specifying object decoding time on the basis of the decoded object display speed information decoded by the display speed information decoding means and object display speed information preset in the decoding device; and decoding means for performing object decoding on the basis of the object decoding time specified by said decoding time specifying means.

12-19. (*Canceled*)

20. (*Previously presented*) An image encoding method for decoding an encoded bit stream formed by encoding images for each object, comprising the steps of:

decoding a header information area of the encoded bit stream to restore display speed information to indicate a number of VOPs displayed per unit time, the display speed information being included as a codeword in the header information area for a

layer that is above a VOP layer and comprises a plurality of VOPs, wherein for the layer above the VOP layer, the header information area is separate from the data area; and reconstructing said encoded images encoded for each object, based on said object display speed information restored by decoding.

21. *(Previously presented)* The image decoding method according to claim 20, wherein said object display speed information is encoded in an object by object basis.

22. *(Previously presented)* The image decoding method according to claim 21, wherein said object display speed information allows for each object to correspond to an independent object display speed.

23. *(Previously presented)* The image decoding device of claim 6, wherein said object display speed information is encoded in an object by object basis.

24. *(Previously presented)* The image decoding device of claim 23, wherein said object display speed information allows for each object to correspond to an independent object display speed.

25. *(Previously presented)* An image decoding device that decodes an encoded data bit stream formed by encoding images for each object, comprising:

a start code analyzer to determine a start code from said encoded bit stream, wherein said start code indicates a header information area for a layer above a VOP layer, wherein for the layer above the VOP layer, the header information area is separate from the data area;

a header analysis device to receive said header information area to determine object display speed information indicating a number of objects displayed per unit time;

a plurality of decoders to decode a plurality of VOP data sets in said encoded data bit stream; and

a video composition means to synthesize said plurality of VOP data sets according to said object display speed information.

26. *(Previously presented)* The image decoding device according to claim 25, wherein said start code analyzer outputs said bit streams to components within said image decoding device according to said start code, said components including said header analysis device.

27. *(Previously presented)* The decoding device according to claim 6, wherein said layer above the VOP is a VOL.

28. *(Previously presented)* The decoding method according to claim 20, wherein said layer above the VOP is a VOL.

29. *(Currently amended)* An image decoding device which decodes an encoded bit stream formed by encoding images for each object, comprising:

display speed information decoding means for decoding a header information area of the encoded bit stream to restore display speed information to indicate a number of VOPs displayed per unit time, the display speed information being included as a codeword in the header information area for a layer that is above a VOP layer and comprises a plurality of VOPs, wherein for the layer above the VOP layer, the header information area is separate from the data area that contains a series of VOP.

30. *(Canceled)*

31. *(Currently amended)* An image decoding method for decoding an encoded bit stream formed by encoding images for each object, comprising the steps of:

decoding a header information area of the encoded bit stream to restore display speed information to indicate a number of VOPs displayed per unit time, the display speed information being included as a codeword in the header information area for a layer that is above a VOP layer and comprises a plurality of VOPs, wherein for the layer above the VOP layer, the header information area is separate from the data area that contains a series of VOP.

32. *(Canceled)*

33. *(Previously presented)* The image recording device according to claim 29, wherein a header of a layer above the VOP layer is a VOL layer.

34. *(Previously presented)* The image recording device according to claim 31, wherein a header of a layer above the VOP layer is a VOL layer.

35-38. *(Canceled)*